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Music Education for students with disabilities: A guide for teachers, parents and students

The inclusive classroom has become a large part of the American education system and has implications for the music classroom. Bryant, Bryant and Smith (2016) described the inclusive classroom as the “educational setting in which students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum, participate in school activities alongside other students without disabilities, and attend their neighborhood school” (p. 33). Students with disabilities should find a natural home in the inclusive music classroom, because every student can perform music to some degree. Though music’s expressiveness allows limitless possibilities, some teachers are uncomfortable making requisite modifications for various reasons. Music teachers need resources to help accommodate the varying demands of students’ motor capabilities, the performance needs of the ensemble or class, and educational law.

Music teachers may struggle to accommodate learners who have poor motor skill control or underdeveloped social skills. In a music classroom, teachers can select appropriate music, modify student parts, or alter performance tasks so that all students are successful at some level. In such cases, audiences are unable to tell whether a student is performing an altered part so each student can contribute at their own level. Inclusive classrooms also allow for social development for students with disabilities, because they are surrounded by a diversity of students and have more opportunities to make friends. Unlike in core subjects or other disciplines where students work alone, the music classroom is a place for collaboration, which means that students have to work together and accept each other. This can help students with social disabilities expand and improve their social skills.

The purpose of this paper is to provide some ideas, resources, and support for accommodating students with disabilities in music classes, including performing ensembles. First, we provide an overview of special education in America with a particular emphasis on music education. Next, we describe current inclusion practices that are used within the music classroom. Finally, we provide information for three groups of people involved in the music education of learners with special needs: learners, parents, and music teachers. It is hoped that this resource will be useful in making it possible to include students of all types in American music education programs.

Brief History of Special Education in America

Special education in America has changed during the past four decades. Prior to The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (HR8070), students with disabilities were not served at all through the public education system. Though HR8070 increased equal access to facilities, services and treatment for students with disabilities, it did not give them entry into the public education system. It was in 1975 that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) became law granting students with disabilities access to self-contained academic classrooms within the public school system.

A tenet of IDEA law was the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), which required schools to educate all students in “regular” classrooms as much as possible. It was presumed that students with disabilities would learn best alongside other students, but that certain situations might require alternative placements (Hammel & Hourigan,

2011, p.34). Most students can be served in general education classrooms with low teacher to student ratios or with special education co-teachers. Students whose disabilities are more severe may be better served in “resource rooms, special classes, special schools, home instruction settings, and hospitals,” (Bryant, Bryant, & Smith, 2016, p. 27). Some learners may require help with life skills and have the option to attend classes, outside of the general education classes, that help them learn how to do laundry or keep a job. The most important component was that all students get an education appropriate to their needs. “A balance must be achieved between inclusive instruction and a curriculum that is appropriate and is delivered in the most effective setting” (Bryant, Bryant, & Smith, 2016, p. 27).

IDEA also allowed students with disabilities general access to certain disciplines, because “whenever possible students with disabilities should be included in the public education system and mainstreamed...such as in art, music, and physical education” (Bryant, Bryant, & Smith, 2016, p. 33). This was the first time students with disabilities were mainstreamed in music classes allowing all students to obtain the same music experiences and music education. It also created new challenges for music teachers trying to design instruction appropriate for all students.

A change in attitude toward people with disabilities accompanied the changes in law. An early attitude is reflected in Graham and Beer’s (1980) statement that, “the ‘least restrictive’ alternative may imply limited participation of some handicapped [sic] students with non-handicapped [sic] students” (p. 41). This statement illustrates the continued limiting language and application of law regarding special learners in schools.

The next evolution of attitude and law was the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which solidified a future for students with disabilities. It was aimed at halting discrimination toward all Americans with disabilities in the workforce, thus giving graduating students with disabilities opportunities for future employment. All of these laws and initiatives improved the quality of education and employment available to students with disabilities, but they remained outside of the “normal” population. Special education was continuing to change and make changes to better educate students with disabilities.

IDEA was amended in 1997 to focus on improving the screening process for students with disabilities for early diagnosis and service. It allowed for timely development of individualized education programs (IEPs) that focus on improving educational results while the students are in inclusive classrooms, setting higher expectations, and making sure parents were included in their children’s educations.

In 2001, the reauthorization of Lyndon B. Johnson’s 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, called No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was implemented. NCLB “was intended to level the field for all children, especially the underprivileged, served by Title I” (Mark & Gary, 2007, p. 452). Testing was highly emphasized in this law because educational policy makers wanted to implement accountability standards and see educational success in the core subjects. NCLB identified core subjects as language arts, English, reading, mathematics, science, civics and government, economics, foreign languages, arts, history, and geography. Each state could decide which core subject tests, in addition to mathematics and reading, would determine a school’s success rates. Due to the increased testing demands in reading and mathematics, they became the subjects of primary focus in schools.

NCLB also made special education students members of the general public school population. Under NCLB, all students' standardized test scores were calculated in school evaluations, which led to the education of almost all students with disabilities in regular classrooms. The combination of higher absolute bars and the inclusion of all students' scores in school evaluations caused many school's test scores to drop. When test scores started to drop because of NCLB, music classes were discontinued for students, with and without disabilities, who did not meet standardized test benchmarks. "Students within a school who are struggling to meet the standards of NCLB may be temporarily denied access to music if they are required to attend remediation..." (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011, p. 36).

Mark and Gary (2007) estimated that "during the period from 2000 to 2004...participation in general music courses went down by almost 89 percent" in reaction to NCLB and prior budget cuts (p. 405). Music declined more than any other arts subject during NCLB. Music teachers had to relate their classes to the core subjects of mathematics and reading to help teach students for the assessments, rather than address solely musical objectives. This negatively impacted the quality of education students received as "tests did not necessarily measure children's knowledge, but only whether schools are successful in preparing students for the test" (Mark & Gary, 2007, p. 453). In reaction to hindered student's learning and loss of time from valuable subjects such as music, Race to the Top (RTTT) was passed in 2009.

RTTT was an attempt to improve the practices of NCLB. RTTT was a government lead initiative that distributed over 4.3 billion dollars of federal funding to states that met four main criteria: increased standards and assessments; better infrastructure to help communicate information to teachers, students and parents; support for teachers and school leaders; and increased focus and resources to help underperforming schools reach higher standards (whitehouse.gov). Grant money would be given to states only if the state applied and ranked well on the government's 500-point scale. This initiative was created in an attempt to incentivize states into improving their struggling schools and to reward states that made improvement.

In regards to special education, RTTT removed special education test scores from the overall school score, which meant that special education was placed in an educational limbo. Special education programs have reaped some benefits of the RTTT initiative, but they also lost priority over standardized test scores and risked falling behind in their learning. Since special education courses did not count towards the RTTT funding initiative, they were placed on the backburner to "tested subjects" in some states.

Music education was similarly impacted by the RTTT initiative. The initiative does not account for the measurement of musical growth or learning, and never incentivized any arts courses. Just as "tested subjects" became priority over special education concerns, the increased funding available for high test scores also placed standardized testing above any type of art. Ultimately the RTTT initiative greatly reduced and would have essentially eliminated the arts, but education policy makers intervened with a new law: the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Following years without a substantive overhaul of educational law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law at the end of 2015. ESSA built on key areas such as incorporating the art and focusing on education, rather than testing to help expand educational opportunities for all students. Just as in NCLB and RTTT, ESSA requires

that states hold students to high standards so that they graduate well prepared for college and career. There is also a similar focus on supporting the success of students who perform in the bottom five percent academically. ESSA is different from NCLB and RTTT in that it provides more state control to make decisions about how school systems should improve their schools. With ESSA, educational policy makers are trying to return parent, teacher and student focus to learning rather than testing.

ESSA impacts special education quite a bit. First, it requires plans for reducing bullying and exclusion, both of which disproportionately impact special education students. ESSA provides support for new literacy programs for people with disabilities such as dyslexia. It also brings increased funding for gifted programs due to the Jacob K. Javits education act which was passed with this bill. ESSA is also being portrayed by the current media as handing more control over all aspects of the education back to the states, but the reaction of each state to the bill is forthcoming.

ESSA places music education as a vital part of the academic curricula and, as such, it will no longer be acceptable to pull students out of music classes for academic remediation. Now students with and without disabilities will attend music classes and get a well rounded education. This gives students more classroom time in a variety of subject classes and less time focused exclusively on test preparation. Just as we await state's reactions to ESSA for special education, we await the specific implications for music education. It is reasonable to assume, however, that music educators will have the privilege and responsibility of including more students with various disabilities into their general music and performing ensemble courses. The next section of this document is meant to provide ideas, resources, and support for teaching students with disabilities in the 21st century music classroom.

Inclusion

Many methods of inclusion are implemented daily in academic classrooms. Villa and Thousand (2005) state that it is most effective to have all students work together in a unified classroom. This is because all aspects of a student's environment impact their education. When teachers set high standards, students, with and without disabilities, frequently rise to the challenge and surpass expectations. Villa and Thousand (2005) outline two common inclusion practices that benefit all students in an academic setting. First, through differentiated instruction, because "students are provided with individualized approaches to curriculum, assessment (e.g. nonbiased assessment procedures, multiple approaches to intelligence), and instruction because of high expectations held for all students" (p.8). For students with disabilities this can refer to IEPs and 504 plans that provide teachers with useful information about fulfilling individual student needs. By using such information to design lesson plans, assignments and tests to fit the needs of individual students, teachers help to ensure that every student has an opportunity to succeed in the classroom.

A second inclusion practice documented by Villa and Thousand (2005) includes "heterogeneous and cooperative group arrangements of students are used because they are more effective for learning" (p. 8). Group work allows for students to help and teach each other, promoting learning of the subject matter as well as social skills. The social skills learned through interactions and collaborations with a variety of people prepare students with and without disabilities to work with all people in the work force.

These current inclusion practices in general education can also be applied to music education. General music classes more closely align to academic classes and can frequently employ similar inclusion techniques, but directors might struggle to balance the needs of the performing ensemble with those of certain students with disabilities. Music teachers who are willing to research, collaborate with special education teachers and support personnel, and try creative ideas can provide a quality ensemble experience to students with many disabilities without sacrificing the performance level of their groups. In fact, many of the accommodations that allows students with disabilities access to ensemble classes also benefit the students without disabilities in the classes.

Chorus directors can record the different singing parts individually and give them out to students who have trouble hearing their parts, reading music, or memorizing so that they can practice outside of class (Carpenter, 2015). At the GA Academy for the Blind, students who have varied visual and cognitive impairments use large-print and braille music, including braille notation, to succeed in learning their music. Salvador (2013) emphasizes the need for communication between all members of the choir in the process of serving students with disabilities. It is through communication, and trial and error that the best accommodations and teaching strategies for all students can be developed. Salvador (2013) also gives a list of helpful accommodations such as seated rehearsals, including paraprofessionals or other caregivers, and assigning buddies to help struggling students or students with various physical needs.

Orchestra directors might find help from the modifications suggested by Bugaj (2016), specifically those that involve tailoring string instruments to individual student's needs. If a student's disability prevents them from properly holding an instrument, Bugaj suggests using electronic instruments. For example, an ipad or other tablet with the right software can be used by students with limited motor skills to create the appropriate musical sounds. McDowell (2010) lists quite a few adaptations for string instruments. For example, stringing instruments in reverse order can be an appropriate accommodation for students who have a physical disability with their left hand. The reversed format allows them to bow with their left hand and finger with their right hand. String instruments are also a good choice for students suffering from disabilities like Cystic Fibrosis, cleft palate, or any breathing disability, because the mouth and breathing apparatus are not required for tone production.

The diversity of band instruments makes the band a positive home for many students with various disabilities. McDowell (2010) cites specific advantages and disadvantages when choosing between different band instruments. Brass instruments can be challenging for students who have hearing impairments, because players must distinguish between overtones to play melodies. Students with certain cognitive or motor impairments, however, might find brass instruments easier than woodwinds or strings because brass instruments require comparatively little hand coordination. Woodwinds, especially reeded instruments, seem to be a better choice for students who have hearing problems, because players can feel the vibrations from the reed through their teeth on the mouthpiece. Feeling the vibrations can mimic hearing and help students become successful on the instrument. Woodwinds, however, are harder for students who lack fine motor control because of the independence and speed needed in the fingers. Percussion is a great choice overall for most children with disabilities because there are so many

different percussion instruments than can be played; it is possible to find an instrument for the various needs of every student (Mcdowell, 2010).

Even with the new educational laws protecting students with disabilities in both general and music classrooms, there are still many issues with current inclusion practices. Two of the biggest issues are the fact that teachers may not have been trained or given pre-service experience teaching students with disabilities, especially if they graduated from college more than a decade ago. “Teacher educators often have little or no preparation as to how to educate future music educators regarding the inclusion of music students with disabilities or how to plan, implement, and assess lessons in self-contained and inclusive music classrooms (Hammel & Hourigan, p. 45). Many colleges inadequately prepare preservice music teachers for inclusive classrooms, focusing rather on the “typical” student. College instruction on this subject is typically limited to only one class, but there is no way to learn enough about teaching students with a variety of disabilities and special needs during a single course. These classes are limited to a general overview of diagnoses and a broad understanding of IEPs and 504s. Preservice teachers and current teachers need additional resources to assist their efforts in this area.

Information about inclusion is available and applicable to current teachers and preservice teachers today. Hamel and Hourigan (2011) suggest that music teachers begin by reading the IEP or 504 plan, attending IEP or 504 meetings, assisting students in their primary classroom setting, and reflecting on these experiences, so that music teachers can understand the plan for the needs of their students with disabilities (p.47). The initial planning burden can seem overwhelming for music teachers who are beginning to include more learners with various needs into their classes, but it is important to remember that help is always available. Teachers can consult a special education professional or support person whenever help is needed. Hammel and Hourigan (2011) also advise preservice teachers to include observation hours and one-on-one assistant in special education settings to gain experience for their future teaching positions.

The goal of this work is to help music teachers navigate the ever changing field of educational law as it pertains to special education and music education. The following section includes many resources to help teachers, parents, and students with special needs make the most of their music education experiences. This resource provides links and information including lesson plans, teaching techniques and strategies that can be used to aid in the education of students with disabilities. Parents, pre-service educators, and teachers should all find this resource to be a comprehensive guide that can help everyone traverse the road that is special education.

Resources

- Links
 - <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/programs/atp/Documents/AdaptingMusicalActivitiesforPersonswithDisabilities.pdf>
 - Article on adapting instruments: which ones are easy to adapt
 - <http://specialneedsgeneralmusic.weebly.com/adaptive-music-instruments.html>
 - Has simple instrument modification examples
 - <http://www.musictherapy.org/>

- Musictherapy.org offers resources and research articles on the impact music can have on children with disabilities.
- www.broaderminded.com
 - A website devoted to incorporating music and students with disabilities
- <http://www.nafme.org/>
 - Nafme includes research articles, special education tips, lesson plans, and other useful tools that can help you make a better inclusion classroom.
- <https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/fr/fr18/issue1/f180105.htm>
 - Article that discusses how blind students can be taught by braille
- <http://www.nafme.org/teaching-tips/t138/>
 - Tips for teaching students with disabilities in the classroom
- <http://www.brighthubeducation.com/>
 - Under the special ed tab, there are bunch of resources on physical, cognitive, and learning disabilities.
- <http://www.nafme.org/wp-content/files/2015/08/Why-Join-a-Music-Booster-Group.pdf>
 - Discusses why it is important for parents to be a part of the Boosters and how they can be involved to help their children
- <http://www.brighthubeducation.com/special-ed-physical-disabilities/43084-classroom-music-activities-for-students-with-physical-challenges/>
 - An article that gives ideas about instrument modifications
- <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Autism.aspx>
 - Explains each disability and gives resources for each
- <http://www.gpat.org/Georgia-Project-for-Assistive-Technology/Pages/default.aspx>
 - Georgia Project for Assistive Technology is designed to promote students' "achievement, productivity, independence and inclusion" through assistive technology and training.
- <http://www.coastmusictherapy.com/free-resources/>
 - Music therapy site that contains many lessons using music as education or music to enhance the educational experiences of students with disabilities
- <http://www.songsforteaching.com/specialneeds.htm>
 - Web-site lists songs that are useful for various learning activities such as appropriate behavior, body motions, and transition times.
- <http://www.occupationaloctavespiano.com>
 - A piano method specifically designed for students with autism.
- <http://specialneedsinmusic.com>
 - Links to various activities and resources to teach students with disabilities about music and through music.
- <http://www.specialneeds.com/categories/activities/music-art-and-movement>

- Links to various resources to teach music, art, and movement to students with disabilities.
- Books
 - “Teaching Music to Students with Special Needs: A Label-free Approach” Hammel and Hourigan
 - “Teaching Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Classrooms”- Bryant, Bryant and Smith
 - “Music Teaching Style: Moving Beyond Tradition”- Alan Gumm
 - “The Everything Parent’s Guide to Special Education: A Complete Step-By-Step Guide to Advocating for Your Child with Special Needs”- Amanda Morin
 - “Parents Have the Power to Make Special Education Work: An Insider Guide”- Judith Cantry Graves, Carson Graves
 - “Parents and Professionals Partnering for Children With Disabilities: A Dance That Matters”- Janice Fialka, Arlene Feldman
 - “Parenting Gifted Kids: Tips for Raising Happy and Successful Gifted Children”- James Delisle
 - “Special Education Law”- Laura Rothstein, Scott Johnson
 - “Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy: The Special Education Survival Guide”- Peter Wright, Pamela Wright
 - “Wrightslaw: All About IEPs”- Peter Wright, Pamela Wright
 - “Wrightslaw: Special Education Law, 2nd edition”- Peter Wright, Pamela Wright
 - “Music for Special Kids: Musical Activities, Songs, Instruments and Resources”- Pamela Ott
 - Exceptional Music Pedagogy for Children with Exceptionalities: International Perspectives- Deborah VanderLinde Blair, Kimberly McCord
- Company websites
 - <http://www.nafme.org/wp-content/files/2015/08/Your-Music-Partners.pdf>
 - List of partners that may be useful to parents, teachers, and students
 - www.wwbw.com
 - Instrument website to supply the parents with to find affordable instruments.
 - <http://www.musicfortheblind.com>
 - Website that has music to buy for the visually impaired
 - <http://autismate.com>
 - An Ipad app meant for autism therapy
 - <http://www.loc.gov/nls/music/>
 - Provide braille music
 - <http://www.aph.org/>
 - Printing house for the blind
 - <http://www.whirlwindwheelchair.org/>
 - Has rough terrain wheelchairs that could be used for marching band

- <http://www.mobility-advisor.com/all-terrain-wheelchair.html>
 - Has rough terrain wheelchairs that could be used for marching band
- www.vicfirth.com
 - Videos that explain simple rudiments and other percussion techniques
- Videos
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX_0m_hbzYg - “Kids with disabilities inspire a musical instrument”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6nJk7ZAr5k> - “ELLs (and Music) (Foundations 1 of Music Education Assessment Project BONUS VIDEO)”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeRus3NVbwE> - “TEDxSydney- Richard Gill- The Value of Music Education”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O91YWQoUnXE> - “Special Ed Music Class”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkhbSuVX3mQ> - “Special Education Resources:How to Use Music to Motivate a Child to Communicate”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPW-OaibULM> - “St. Francis Marching Band with Alex Novak in Wheelchair on 10/10/2014 Ghostbusters”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6WAqV4fZk4> - “Band Camp: The Ohio State School for the Blind Marching Band”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFREdp9FJE8> - “Special Education Resources: How to Use Music to Help Children Learn Academics”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiqcSsznrKE> - “Special Education Resources: How to Create Musical Social Stories”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNiq2Ku-gVE>- “Special Education Resources: 5 Reasons Why Music is So Powerful for Kids with Special Needs”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEqneyZXrjM>- “Music Therapy for Autism: Music Motivates Child with Autism to Communicate”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GW-kALtsbiQ>- “Music Therapy and Autism Connect”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0H9AbIvFJk8>- “Music for Early Childhood & KIds w/ Special Needs- 4 Songs- liferhythmmusic.com”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWMjgTbLn8k>- “Students with Special Needs in Music Classes- Music Teachers Q and A”
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IM3q_I3J0Ts - “Inner Vision- Music Education for the Visually Impaired and Blind”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/user/freeplayersdrumline>- “FREE Players Drum Corps Trailer”
 - Free Players Drum Corps video that shows guard members and percussion members
- Technology
 - www.quavermusic.com
 - www.musictheory.org

- <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/students/features/series/kids-channels/gobo> - videos and games for students
- Forscore (app)- puts all scores on ipad. Allows you to make edits, take notes, record and you can share it with your students (modify parts)
- Smartmusic
- R-Tap Drums (app)- a virtual drum set. Could allow for someone to play in an ensemble
- Garageband- electronic music, recording, a variety of instruments that could be played with an ensemble
- Music tutor (app)- ear training, theory practice
- Online games that practice musical elements
 - <http://disneychannel.disney.com/games>
 - <http://pbskids.org/games/music/>
 - <http://www.klsriley.com/for-students/online-music-games/>
- Personal reflections/ vignettes/ testimonials
 - <http://www.nafme.org/wp-content/files/2015/08/A-Parents-Perspective.pdf>
 - <http://www.nafme.org/a-parents-perspective-what-music-has-given-our-children/>
 - https://www.iesa.org/documents/activities/IESA-MU_Disabilities.pdf
 - http://ocm.auburn.edu/newsroom/news_articles/2015/10/blind-freshman-finds-tradition-and-spirit-as-member-of-auburn-university-marching-band.htm
 - Accommodating a student with visual impairment in the Auburn University marching band
 - <http://www.theplainsman.com/article/2015/08/music-major-in-marching-band-despite-disability>
 - A student with visual impairment discusses his challenges and accomplishments from middle school band through college band.
 - <http://www.post-gazette.com/news/health/2012/12/03/High-school-bands-become-champions-for-kids-with-disabilities/stories/201212030158>
 - A story about a trumpet player who has autism, but has been given the opportunity to be a part of all aspects of band. It talks about how it has helped the student and what the teacher has learned from this experience.
- Financial Supports
 - <https://www.disability.gov/scholarships-specifically-students-disabilities/>
 - <http://project10.info/DetailPage.php?MainPageID=167&PageCategory=Financial%20Resources&PageSubCategory=None>
 - <http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/Id.phtml>
- Emotional Support
 - <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>
 - <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/parentgroups/>
 - <http://www.childrensdisabilities.info/parenting/groups-childrensdisabilities.html>
 - <http://ldaamerica.org/parents/>

- Lesson plans
 - <http://thebeamz.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Beamz-Lesson-Plans-1-13-100510.pdf>
 - Example lesson plans that cover technology, therapeutic exercises, rhythms, instrument appreciation, and games that can be used in an inclusive classroom.
 - <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/music-with-special-needs-students-michelle-lazar>
 - Article outlines some ways to use music in the education of students with special needs. Author is an autism specialist and music therapist.
 - <http://www.nafme.org/strategies-for-working-with-special-needs-students-in-the-general-music-classroom/>
 - Strategies for teaching students with disabilities in the music classroom.
 - <http://www.songsforteaching.com/specialneeds.htm>
 - Songs that are listed into sections that address physical challenges, cognitive challenges, etc.
 - <https://www.musick8.com/html/ideadisplay.php?ibid=386>
 - Perspective and short lesson descriptions for self-contained music classes.
 - <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED490348.pdf>
 - Research paper outlining the benefits of the inclusive music classroom. Contains ideas for teaching music to students with disabilities.
 - <https://www.nyssma.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Sobol-Elise-S.pdf>
 - Movement in different tempos helping with cognitive function
 - <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/commoncore/SDI-GuidanceDocument.pdf>
 - A lesson plan template that includes typical vocabulary and a sample lesson plan
- Tips for Accommodating Learners with Disability in the Beginning Band Class
 - Get to know your students before assigning instruments. Pay attention to the abilities of individuals as well as the needs of the ensemble.
 - Recorder or song flute instruction is a cheap way to assess finger technique before assigning students to woodwind instruments.
 - Testing for embouchure formation sets students up for success
 - Flute: lip shape, aperture, play high and low notes on head joint
 - Brass: students' natural buzz should determine instrument placement
 - High, tight buzz should play trumpet or horn
 - Medium buzz should play trombone or euphonium
 - Low, loose buzz should play tuba
 - Brass: test matching pitch by echo singing. Students who have trouble echo singing will do better on woodwind and percussion instruments.

- Percussion: test coordination and ability to learn quickly and independently
- Students with mild cognitive, behavioral, or emotional disabilities can frequently keep up with most performance assignments.
 - Simplify parts as needed. Simplify complicated parts into simple rhythms or octaves for students who are struggling.
 - Reduce parts as needed. Edit out some parts so that struggling students can concentrate on performing less material better.
- Assign peer buddies to assist students with disabilities (or assign peer buddies to everyone in the band).
 - Note: Do not use gifted students as peer mentors unless the individual student wants to perform that task. Gifted students can become frustrated at constantly trying to teach struggling learners. This should be done on a case-by-case basis depending on the wishes and temperament of the gifted student and the work ethic of the struggling student.
- Encourage students with disabilities to write note-names, rhythm counts, and/or fingerings into the music as appropriate. Typically we phase these behaviors out in middle school band, but learners with disabilities may benefit from continuing the practice. Additionally, peer buddies may be useful for assisting with these markings when student struggle more significantly.
- Original lesson plans:

Freeze Dance (General Music)

Objectives:

Student will learn creative movements
 Student will hold a pose “freeze”
 Student will stop when music stops

Materials:

Any song appropriate for dancing

Procedure:

1. Play the selected song
2. Demonstrate creative dance/movement
3. Demonstrate freezing when the music stops
4. Assess the students as they perform alone
5. Repeat with a different song

Assessment:

The teacher will evaluate for creative movements appropriate to music and that the student froze when the music stopped.

Steady Beat (General Music/Beginning Band)

Objectives:

Students will keep a steady beat
 Students will be able to start and stop on cue
 Students will play percussion instruments with correct technique

Materials:

Any rhythmic instruments such as rhythm sticks, shakers, tambourines, sleigh bells, etc.

Any song in 4/4 meter

Procedure:

1. Demonstrate the correct use of the chosen instrument(s)
2. Play a song in 4/4 and demonstrate how to keep a steady beat
3. Have the students keep a steady beat with you
4. Change songs and repeat steps 2&3
5. Assess

Assessment:

The teacher can assess each student's ability to keep a steady beat, follow directions and use correct playing technique on the selected instrument(s).

Instrument Recognition (General Music/Beginning Band)

Objectives:

Students will identify trombone, trumpet and saxophone.

Students will identify instruments by timbre and identify the correct instrument.

Student will learn about jazz music

Materials:

Any viewing screen large enough to be seen by the entire class

Internet access or access to specific videos

Procedure

1. Play students a video of a saxophonist playing.
2. Have the students mimic the motion of playing a saxophone
3. Repeat steps 1&2 for trombone and trumpet respectively
4. Play only an audio clip of each of the instruments and have students mimic the motion of playing the instrument.
5. Repeat 1-4 until students seem to have a grasp of the concept

Assessment:

The teacher will evaluate if the student is mimicking and recognizing the tones of the different instruments.

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